

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the careful consideration of this application. Claims 1 and 14-23 are currently pending. Claims 14, 19, and 23 have been amended. Claims 2-13 have been cancelled, without prejudice. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Third Request for Consideration of IDS Reference

The Office Action indicated that Cite No. BF on the Information Disclosure Statement of March 16, 2007 was not considered because no concise explanation of relevance of the non-English document (Italian Patent Application No. TO2002A000428) was provided. The Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's refusal to consider the cited document. Nevertheless, the Applicant submits herewith an Information Disclosure Statement citing International Publication No. WO 03/097362, which is an English-language counterpart of TO2002A000428. TO2002A000428 is also cited in the Information Disclosure Statement submitted concurrently herewith. The Applicant requests that the Examiner consider both of these references, and return a signed and initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08 submitted herewith to Applicant.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant appreciates the Office Action's allowance of claims 1 and 20-22, and indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14-19. Claims 14 and 19 have been amended to

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Application No.: 10/579,853

overcome the claim objections. Claim 23 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of prior intervening claim 9. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objected to claims 14 and 19 for containing a typographical error in “grater.” Claims 14 and 19 have been amended to change “grater” to “greater.” Accordingly, the Applicant requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2003-251595 to Minowa (“Minowa”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,789,969 to Hirabayashi et al. (“Hirabayashi”). The Applicant traverses this rejection. Nevertheless, claim 23, which was previously indicated as being directed to allowable subject matter, has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of prior intervening claim 9. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that claim 23 is now in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

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Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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